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AUTHOR Penland, Patrick R.
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ABSTRACT

A national study investigated the self-learning patterns of adult individuals who employ a wide range of community resources and materials for independent learning projects. The models from which the hypotheses, the interview instrument, and the response analyses were taken included previous survey research about independent learning as well as learning and communication theory. Subjects were selected from the U.S. population by means of a modified probability sample. They responded to a one-hour interview based on a pretested questionnaire dealing with the respondents' patterns and purposes of continuing adult learning and their information seeking and utilization habits. A variety of demographic characteristics and sociocultural information was also obtained from each respondent. Among the major findings are the following: Four out of five American adults are involved in a learning project each year; self-initiated adult learners can be found at all social, economic, educational, and occupational levels; film, book, and magazine resources are largely associated with learning; self-initiated adult learners are highly "goal-oriented" and have very individualistic learning patterns; adult learners often feel a need to establish the pace and control the character of their learning experiences; time devoted to a learning project can range from 1 to 900 hours, the average being 156; adult independent learners prefer to study at home; and the "learning episode" is the basic unit around which a learning project is constructed. (DT)

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Presentation Draft at the 1978 Adult Education Research Conference

SELF-PLANNED LEARNING IN AMERICA

Patrick R. Penland, PhD*

The study, Self-Planned Learning in America, investigated the information-processing and self-learning patterns of individuals who employ a wide range of community resources and provisions for independent learning projects. The prevalence of learning in America has become evident; and the realization of a learning society, based upon a socially relevant individualism, appears to be much closer at hand. Learning in real life is closely related to the environment out of which it grows in an organic and developmental manner.

The basic problem which initiated the study was the lack of a systematic behavioral foundation for a professional helping relationship. Leaders of the various professions in the community have for years emphasized the necessity of a more extensive consideration of learning psychology as a basis for the delivery of humanly meaningful services. The report of this study as a precedent in the human services delivery professions supports a responsive helping relationship with a firm research base.

The findings of this project are needed in the American professional community. It is difficult to find comprehensive studies about the psychological aspects of learning by the average adult citizen much less appraise the impact of behavioral patterns on the practitioner's helping relationship. The human services delivery professions do not know enough about how information is processed in a learning project by individuals among a wide range of citizens who live in communities.

The guidance competencies of the traditional practitioner have not generally been grounded on the findings of adult behavioral research. Any awareness of a relation between learning or communication theory and client guidance unfortunately depends upon the variant "philosophies" of individual practitioners. Most tragic, perhaps of all, is the fact that community professionals see their guidance practices as a way of fitting patrons into a preconceived model of assistance rather than developing a relationship-in-process with emerging client articulations.

Verification and validation in a national survey was considered to be a necessary step before a truly professional response could be de-

*Professor of Education and Library Science, Graduate School of Library and Information Sciences, University of Pittsburgh. The complete report of this study is available at cost-recovery of $6.50 from the Book Center, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA 15260.

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veloped by the adult educator towards the emerging needs of clients. Few if any approaches other than this survey research have investigated such a broad range of learners and non-learners in the American population. This investigation goes beyond the limitations of the so-called user-survey so typical of institutional efforts towards program planning and curriculum development in continuing education.

The study meets a number of criticisms sometimes leveled at adult learning research. The sample was not designed and limited to suit an institutional user survey; the entire population was sampled with mathematical rigor. Instead of a "one-shot" noncumulative approach, the study was conceived, developed and executed within a framework of learning research. Thus, the dichotomy can be bridged which often exists between practical research and the theoretical constructs upon which the profession is presumed to rest.

This study may have been conducted under "library" auspices; but the scope of concern and the subsequent research findings are not limited to the specializations of media, library and information science. Of primary consideration is the present readiness of this information-processing profession to "come abroad" other socially relevant professional endeavor and work in social teams for the coordination of service delivery systems humanly meaningful to all citizens regardless of socio-cultural and demographic characteristics. Survey research support is now available for a deliberate and concerted effort towards the coordination of otherwise disparate efforts of the various professions in the community.

Objectives and Scope of the Study

The contextual setting for the study is the field of adult learning behavior upon which the professional's helping services such as those of the librarian are presumed to rest. Recently and very far from being widely recognized is the discovery that most adults actually do initiate and plan their own learning projects instead of relying upon a teacher to do so. But this is not surprising, since only in the last 50 years has it become even widely accepted that adults can learn anything at all (Thorndike 1928).

A fresh approach to lifelong learning was taken by Tough (1971) and later associates in investigating the behavior of people who design and conduct their own learning projects in contrast to the taxonomic approach so common to the instructional enterprise inferred from the way teachers teach. The impetus for this endeavor grew out of the almost incidental finding of the Johnstone and Rivera study (1965) that adults do initiate learning projects on their own.

A promising start has been made on a line of research which has demonstrated its power to support the uniquely learner-oriented approach to self-planned independent study where helping professionals supposedly have a primary interest. The conceptualization of the learning episodes as identified by Tough (1971) and explicated by Reiser (1973) in a model of sequential information processing has been placed in a continuum of human development by Kidd (1973) and Knowles (1973). Those patrons who use libraries on a somewhat regular basis learn in patterns similar to the majority of learners in the American population (Penland 1976).

The objectives of the study grew out of previous research findings. From the literature surveys, the assumption was made that independent self-designed learning is the overt behavioral evidence of a sequence of information processing episodes. These behavioral episodes are linked together in sequences when the intention to learn is strong. The thesis which this national study addressed includes the following objectives or guiding points which were refined in conferences with the research consultants and the advisory committee:

Citizens of various demographic characteristics plan and develop independent learning projects in quite sophisticated ways which constitutes a behavioral approach to learning.

People tend to use organized resource centers such as libraries only when ready to ask quite specific questions; librarians are not often used as learning consultants compared to other helping persons in the community.

Among the various socioeconomic variables which affect all citizens, a subset of these variables have particular relevance for individually self-designed learning.

Sources consulted by the average citizen range across the entire gamut of real life content and processes and are not limited to highly organized subject collections such as those found in libraries.

Individual needs and interests are initially perceived as coping skills or an interactive set of negotiations within a transactional environment and not as subject content descriptors.

Episodic behavior varies in length of time around function, such as: consulting people; browsing and searching; viewing, listening and reading modalities.

Reasons ("overt motivation") for undertaking a learning project as expressed by respondents constitute the reciprocal of reasons for concluding a project ("overt evaluation").

Self-learning projects as sequences of episodes employ a combination of four major types of resources for planning and development: self as a resource; non-human resource (e.g., printed materials); another person (e.g., a minister or librarian); or a group (both informal and formal).

In general, the purpose of the study can be summarized as a two-pronged approach to adult learning: (1) verify on a national basis the findings of previous surveys using more limited populations (2) explore the reasons and conditions for learning in a self-initiated and self-planned mode. In both instances, the themes and hypotheses of the study were developed out of previous research in motivation and learning.

The scope of the study was limited to the behavioral patterns of adults 18 years of age and older who continue their learning. A continuing self-learner was considered to be an individual (usually adult) who plans and designs an independent learning project. Survey research has shown that even near illiterates and those with low educational levels do participate in a variety of learning projects.

For the purpose of the study, planned and sustained attention to a topic was taken to include a minimum of seven hours spread over at least three days. This minimum comparable to the definition of a learning experience posited by the Adult Education Association of the U. S. has been accepted by previous survey research as evidence in part of the self-learner's intention to learn. Such a project is a sequential learning experience on a topic chosen by the learner and developed in relation to the motivation, planning and evaluation of the learning outcomes.

Methodology

The central thrust of this study investigated the patterns employed by a sample of the U. S. population in planning and in designing individual learning projects. The subjects were selected from the total population in a manner comparable to a public opinion poll. Each randomly selected individual was interviewed about one or more independent learning projects undertaken in the 12 month period previous to November 1976. The most recently completed project received the major emphasis in the interview.

A prefinal version of the survey instrument was pretested for respondent understanding and interviewer processing by the Opinion Research Center (Princeton, NJ). These returns were analyzed and discussed with the pre-test inveterviewers on the scene and the supervisor. As a result of this review, the questionnaire was shortened for completion in a one-hour interview and rearranged somewhat to accomodate more efficiently those who might not be involved with continuing learning of any kind.

The respondents were selected from the U. S. population by means of a modified probability sample designed by Marketmath, Inc. for the Opinion Research Corporation. The demographic frequencies obtained from the survey instrument were fairly congruent with their distribution in the population as a whole. The field work met acceptable survey research standards and was conducted within the original cost estimates.

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Data handling comprising the coding, organization and reduction of the data was done under the direction of an internationally recognized sociologist who is the director, Center for Urban Research, University of Pittsburgh. The statistical analyses growing out of the descriptive frequencies were conducted under the direction of the principal investigator working with a team of consultants and social psychologists. Thus, the integrity of the study was preserved working within the time and budget constraints of the project.

The success of the project for the human services delivery professions with whom librarians participate is based on the findings of the study that have verified the results of previous research. In addition, several sets of statistical routines were planned and executed on the data in order to assess the reasons and conditions for self-planned learning in America. A number of patterns appear to lie behind learning, or be fundamental to it, which were not immediately obvious from the descriptive data frequencies.

The basis for evaluating the successful completion of this project lies in the findings of the study which verify previous research and in the methods of data collection which were representative of the American population. This survey was the major responsibility of the principal investigator working with an advisory committee of librarians, adult educators and social psychologists as well as a group of consultants including sociologists.

The experimental design, the development of the survey instrument and data analysis procedures were determined by the principal investigator working with an advisory committee and research consultants. The assumptions and hypotheses were translated into a specific questionnaire which organized the data collection categories and facilitated the field work. The data about individual self-designed independent learning projects was collected on a sample of respondents such that the patterns observed are representative of the American population.

The final version of the survey questionnaire not only includes the data collection points dictated by the study but also served as a guide to the interviewer and the respondent. The questions in the instrument were essentially divided into three parts:

Questions which sought to obtain response to the patterns and purposes of continuing adult learning

Processes and directions in self-initiated learning projects.

Planning Processes
Reasons for Self-Initiation
Number, Length and Status of Projects
Credentialing of Projects

Processes and directions of formal (courses or school-like activities) learning

Questions eliciting response about information seeking and utilization

Information Sources and Uses
Recency and Duration of Retrieval
Library as Information Center

Items recording a variety of demographic characteristics and some sociocultural information

Age, sex, income, education, marital and residency status, mobility, social class, childhood residence etc.

Intellectualism, value flexibility and organizational leadership

The data obtained by the survey instrument were stored in coded digital format on a computer tape. Eventually these data were advanced to disk storage in order to facilitate the numerous statistical runs required by the analyses. Thus, a learning data base is available upon which comparisons can be made by future behavioral researchers.

Learning Processes:

The prevalence of lifelong learning in America is becoming evident; and the realization of a learning society appears to be close at hand. Four out of five Americans over 18 years of ago were involved in some kind of learning activity during the year previous to data collection. The probability of involvement in learning activities is about 80%; and the likelihood that such activities are self-initiated is almost as high (76%). During the year, each of these self-planned learners were involved in an average of 3 projects which were at least 7 hours or more in length.

In fact, this involvement is so widespread and has so democratically saturated the American population that the traditional demographic characteristics are no longer as effective in predicting the phenomena of self-initiated learning as they may still be able to do in formal learning. Of parallel importance to the emergence of a learning society is the obvious individualism of self-planned learning. In the past, it has often been a voiced regret that Americans are becoming conformists, oriented towards group-think and institutional loyalties. But the evidence is emerging that individualism is alive and well in America, expressed in the wide occurance of self-initiated learning activities.

Learning may be considered to be a "fact of life" and the prevalence of self-initiated learning occurs for various reasons and because of certain conditions. Many patterns lie behind learning and are fundamental to it; but the assistance of a client-oriented professional is an essential component. The topics of self-planned study can be grouped into those which are practical, intrapersonal and subject oriented. Practical topics predominate (75.9%) over the intrapersonal (17.2%), with only a small proportion of attention given to formal subjects (6.9%).

The length of time devoted to a single project may range from 1 hour to 900 or more; but the mean average is of 155.8 hours duration. Thus, self-initiated learning projects are on the average about 3-4 times longer than a typical 3 credit semester length course of about 45 clock hours. Of course, in the latter instance, any adult educator would recognize that most if not practically all of the planning is done for the student. The teacher takes away the "burden" as well as the opportunity to be obtained in planning one's own learning behavior.

There may be as many reasons for lifelong learning as there are citizens negotiating everyday transactions. But a rapidly growing number of individuals prefer those planning modes which include the self as planner ("teacher") or a closely associated and personally accessable helping "assistant" such as another human or a non-human planner. The reasons for undertaking a self-initiated learning project are new; and such comments indicate an increasing maturity among adult learners:

> I like my own way of learning and speed of going about doing it.
>
> I wanted to keep the learning(strategy) flexible and easy to change.
>
> I want to put my own structure on the learning (project) rather than wait for a course.

These reasons indicate that a great many people are concerned about setting their own learning pace and exploring their own style of learning rather than submitting to formal course-oriented experiences. On the other hand, the usual reasons given as to why adults may be inclined to avoid the more formal programs of institutional and adult education were ranked very low indeed:

> Lack of time to engage in a group learning project.
>
> Transportation to a class is too hard or expensive.
>
> Didn't have enough money for a course or class.
>
> Didn't like formal classroom situation with a teacher.

Educators may increasingly want to take into account this growing need of many people for more control over the learning enterprise. Respondents to the study were involved with a number of transactions whose place in the proposed sequence may initially be only dimly perceived. These sets of negotiations have been called planning modes which respondents articulated as clustering around the following four major methods of planning a self-learning project:

> Self-Planner retains the major responsibility for day-to-day decision-making about needs and criteria for selecting and using informative data.
>
> Non-Human Planner such as a series of television programs, programed instructional materials, a workbook or other printed matter can provide a learning blueprint.

Human Planner or "significant other" person helps the learner in a one-to-one situation to fill the gap between the individual's level of competence and the skills necessary to access appropriate resources.

Group Planner such as workshop or a class is accepted in whole or in part by the learner as the source of direction regarding what to learn or do in each episode.

Only a small number (23.6%) of self-initiating learners in this present study employed the group planner for assistance at some point in developing a learning project. Apparently from the "write-in" response, and subsequent multivariate analyses of the total data, the group could serve as a source of ideas for information, resources to explore and tactics which might be employed in a subsequent learning strategy. But in practically every instance, any reliance upon the group for support was but a temporary expediancy among this sample of continuing learners.

The choice of a particular planning mode seems to be based to a considerable extent on individual and transactional considerations at least initially. Competence in learning is a patterned activity designed to perform a coordinated set of behaviors and accomplish a goal set. Thus, it is not surprising to find that those who do undertake learning projects also seek better ways of going about these activities. They are open to advances in information retrieval and to opportunities for broader learning endeavors.

In the last 3-5 years, there has been quite a vocal interest in making academic credit available for the completion of self-initiated learning projects. Most respondents to the study recognized that credentialling has been controlled by the academic institutions such as schools and colleges. But enough "other" responses mentioned various nonformal agencies which thus raises the question of whether the state may in the not too distant future be asked to broaden the base of credit-awarding instrumentalities.

Respondents do have preferences for the location in which they pursue their learning projects, such as the church, the club or lodge, the YMCA and the hospital. Course-oriented locations were the least acceptable. It is probably not surprising that the home is the best preference perhaps accessable in the near future to cable TV. It is however worth observing that on-the-job training also has a high degree of preference -- a fact probably obvious to the adult educator as a vocational counselor. One respondent put the matter this way in ranking job-training as most important:

> I would say on-the-job training with a guaranteed competent instructor. I hate a learning class interested in how many bodies are warming their chairs.

As predicted by theory, self-initiated learning by respondents involved the comparing of behavioral patterns against remembered or retrieved knowledge as well as the modification of perceptual connections. Sustained attention reduces "random" activity, discovers the

information and builds the competence to plan an entire learning sequence. In the process, new competencies are built by observing and receiving "instruction" from environmental imperatives, by making trial performances before adjusting to feedback, and by growing more flexible and independent.

Information Processing:

This study was developed and conducted within the general KPUU (Knowledge Production, Distribution and Utilization) model. All people are presumed to be involved in the processes of information utilization and indeed some aspects of education. The present study was undertaken because it was not previously widely known how and to what extent the processes of information utilization and acquisition are related except possibly in short-term problem solving applications.

Respondents had some difficulty in distinguishing between planning methods and the modalities by means of which information is obtained. The modalities are the ways people receive the information employed in the thinking process. It is interesting to observe that "making notes and writing" is almost as seldom used as "game playing." Clients prefer an "agenda" of their own devising however emotional and personal it may appear. Apparently they want to talk out their version of the situation and "dredge up" from their own background the framework for a solution that can be personally satisfying. Once this creative endeavor is completed, then and only then are they ready for the services which can be proffered by the professional.

The organizational life of the respondents was explored. Organized groups may be sources of information and learning; but they are also areas of life where information and learning can be applied. It appears that the distribution of memberships held for continuing learners is higher than for the population as a whole and with pronounced differences from non-learners. Over half the non-learners held no organizational memberships whatsoever. Apparently organizational involvement provides a framework within which to apply individual learnings.

The variety of sources of information sought by citizens is so varied and extensive that only a "yellow-pages" directory could hope to provide current listings. In any event, the reasons for keeping up to date as ranked by continuing learners appear to be related to the sophistication with which learning is undertaken, such as:

Clarify a situation and make progress towards a goal.

Understand and diagnose the situation and thus achieve self-control.

Choose between options or alternative ways of doing something.

A distinction can be made between the use of information for limited or sporadic periods of time and the more sustained application of it to continuing learning projects. The concept of an episode has been established by this and other studies as the basic unit around which the development of a learning project is constructed. Episodes are not just theories imposed on human behavior but correspond to actual "chunks" of time and activity into which most adults divide their working hours in everyday life.

This episodic "span of attention" may be as brief as ten minutes or last more than an hour. Among respondents who perceive themselves to be continuing learners, 73.2% had deliberately looked up some information within the previous 7 days. The amount of time spent in the retrieval process varied, with 86.5% of the response limited to one hour. In thinking about the information obtained in a typical retreival, 84.5% of the respondents needed the better part of an hour to develop learning tactics and presumably their thoughts as well.

Those who do link episodes together in the sequential activities of a learning project(s) differ in many significant ways from those who do not, or who only participate in courses or other school-like activities. These many ways were explored among respondents in various questions dealing with sources of information goals and uses for learning, patterns and time spend in "thinking" processes as well as the socioculturals of intellectualism, religiosity, and organizational membership plus a number of demographic variables.

The library as one community resource center was selected because of its presumed "visiblity" in order to obtain data on frequency of use despite the fact that response may be "self-perceptual" and would need to be refined in further studies. The library as an information center was rated very low indeed in contrast to other relevantly negotiable sources even though considerably more time was required to follow-up on the retrievals. It would appear that movements within the profession towards shifting emphasis from internal library resources to the organization and indexing of all community resources and provisions should be advanced to higher priority.

Unfortunately, reading and libraries are associated in the minds of the people with formal teaching topics which have an infrequent occurance in self-planned learning. Those who limit their learning to formal topics not only use the library more often; but they browse in reference books when using such a center and tend to employ a group planner in developing their learning projects. Such learning modes are not as often used in intrapersonal topics where the process group is often rated highest; whereas these modes are conspicuously absent from the pattern of those involved with practical topics.

As expected, film or book and magazine resources were largely associated with formal learning ; while commercial radio and television tends towards a weak association with learning activities of any kind. Those individuals who use the mass media of communication, particularly television, do not do nearly as much continuing learning as those who use individual human and non-human resources. However, other findings were not expected such as the amount and extent of informal lifelong learning as well as its positive association with the resources available in exhibits, recordings, tapes, musea and field trips.

The client system may eventually want objective and procedural information. But the first order of business in the interface is the professional who can listen to worry or complaints and help the client dredge up internal and subjective information. Citizens want the op-

opportunity to describe themselves in unique situational involvement and have their efforts to "create" information recognized. The tactics and strategies of the client-oriented "professional" have to be those which elicit perceptions of such "problems" as worry over change disturbances, complaints about shared and possibly divided control and apprehension over whether tentatively formulated hypotheses may be criticized.

Summary Conclusions:

There are several major conclusions to this pace-setting study. From the citizen's viewpoint, there is a considerable discrepancy between the expectations being raised about the quality of life and the availability of personal access to needed sources and provisions. Adults involved in lifelong learning require "shopping-center" access to the delivery of human services in order to offset the usual "run-around" of various learning and information sources. Such a concept is attainable when adult educators, information brokers and community development personnel work together on the interdisciplinary teams so essential in today's communities.

So prevalent is the use of community learning resources in developing self-initiated learning projects that one can talk of the "invisible" university as a functional alternate to the institutional and other academic delivery systems. Such a university is only invisible in that it does not have institutional recognition; and this in itself may be a good thing. Certainly people are not constrained by credits, groups and teachers in creating the new ideas and innovative projects so necessary to the quality of life in this last quarter of the century.

Perhaps the most important conclusion of all is that citizens no longer feel it necessary to apologize for their out-of-school learning as if it were somehow below the level of acceptability. Self-initiated and self-planned learning <u>is</u> learning of a high order made so not only by its prevalence but by the care and deliberation taken in its development. The learning which occurs is a credit to the ordinary American citizen and should be recognized by a self-learners Bill of Rights. Rights such as these demand at least "formal" or official recognition of citizen accomplishments in lifelong learning.

Beyond this, such a bill could establish standards for community agencies and institutions by means of which their relevance in supporting lifelong learning could be appraised and evaluated. Such a statement, perhaps supported by state and federal policy, would recognize the widespread occurance of self-initiated and self-planned learning found by this and other studies. But of greater significance would be acknowledgment of the resources and provisions of the community as the primary environment programed for learning and within which the maturation of the individual and the quality of social life are enhanced.

One thing is certain; the majority of adult citizens do not have a pathological overreliance upon the schools and credentialing for the most important learning of all -- the self-maturation of the individual citizen. Thus the community has become a school and the market place of

learning projects where reading materials almost litter the landscape; where sight and movement inform the eyes with surprising variety; and where the ear learns about the widest coverage of events whether local or international.

A broader perspective is developing over the fact that community problems can be solved most readily and satisfactorily at the local level. Leadership for this endeavor is being expected from helping teams composed of practitioners from various social professions instead of individual consultants. Professions which still suffer from a lack of models and standards for such a progressive approach will find the results of this study all the more significant. Findings about the widespread patterns of citizen information processing and learning behavior which may not previously have been evident are now available to the various community helping professions.

This survey offers an important contribution to the study of self-planned learning behavior. Many of the findings identified in previous studies of more limited geographic range have been given added verification on the basis of a national probability sample. These findings are expected to have the following results on client centered helping professions:

Offset the limitations of a normative model of the community practitioners by replacing an intuitive understanding of human behavior with the findings of adult learning psychology.

Replace the research-barren principles of "information" delivery with models of human behavior which are fruitful for experimental research, and thus call a halt to the noncumulative aspects of "library" research.

Provide an initial research base upon which an experimental learning approach can replace the theories developed from the way teachers teach or librarians instruct in library use.

Demonstrate to the profession the advantages of probability sample surveys done on a national level in order to shift emphasis from the numerous "data user" surveys done in limited areas.

Encourage administrators and supervisors in local community schools, libraries and colleges to develop and defend professional helping roles required by interdisciplinary human services delivery teams.

Alert other professions that librarians are ready to participate on the interdisciplinary teams required to help community efforts in improving the quality of life and in moving towards planned social change.

Lay the basis of a rationale for human relations training among practitioners whose interpersonal and question processing behavior is often peremptory and thus inimical to the exploratory and transactional nature of independent self-learning.

This report presents the behavioral aspects of learning by the average citizen so that the impact of such behavioral patterns on the professionals helping relationship may eventually be assessed. This project has not been a "user study" in the sense employed in traditional institutional surveys of patrons however useful these may be. Numberous user studies have been conducted and synthesized by annual and other reviews of the literature; but they are rarely conducted into the concerns and interests of the average citizen, or into the behavioral aspects of that sequential information processing which occurs within such individual client systems.

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SELF-PLANNED LEARNING IN AMERICA*

Patrick R. Penland

Graduate School of Library and Information Sciences
University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA 15260

Abstract

The study investigated the self-learning patterns of individuals who employ a wide range of community resources and materials for independent learning projects. The models from which the hypotheses, the interview instrument, and the response analyses were taken included previous survey research about independent learning as well as learning and communication theory. The respondent sample was representative of the United State population and data was collected by means of quality controlled and widely accepted survey research methods. The study as a precedent in the human services delivery professions supports a responsive helping relationship with a firm research base more acceptable to the interdisciplinary professional teams working to improve the quality of life for all people in the community. Among the major findings of the year-long national survey of independent adult learning in America are:

Four out of five American adults are involved in a learning project each year and the probability is 75% that it is self-initiated.

Self-initiated adult learners can be found at all social, economic, educational, and occupational levels in the population. Traditional demographic characteristics, therefore, are not always useful in predicting those individuals most likely to engage in systematic learning projects.

Film, book and magazine resources are largely associated with learning; while commercial radio and television is only weakly associated with learning. The positive association of lifelong learning with such resources as exhibits, recordings, tapes, muses and field trips suggest a largely underdeveloped role for museums and cable television.

Self-initiating adult learners are higly "goal-oriented," and patterns of self-directed learning are very individualistic. Adults attempt to draw on a wide range of community resources. The study suggests the need for interdisciplinary community learning resource teams--consultants, librarians, and other information professions--to provide "shopping center" access to the delivery of human educational services.

Adult learners often feel a strong need to establish the pace and control the character of their learning experiences. For this reason, only one out of five adult Americans enrolls in formal school or college courses where responsibility for guiding one's own learning must be relinquished to a teacher or group leader.

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The desire of individuals to set their own learning pace and to explore their own styles of learning, rather than submit to formal course-oriented experiences, was cited far more frequently as a reason for avoiding formal adult education courses in schools and colleges than were such factors as lack of time, transportation problems, or cost considerations commonly believed to be significant deterrants to enrollment.

Individuals develop their own learning patterns, sometimes obtaining help from human learning consultants, group planners, and such non-human resources as television courses, programmed instruction, or workbooks, but often by trial and error.

The time devoted to a single learning project can range from one to more than 900 hours. The average time for a single adult learning project was 156 hours, which is more than three times longer than the number of contact hours in a typical semester-length college course.

Adult independent learners most often prefer to study at home suggesting a major role for upchannel cable television. On-the-job training also ranks high. Formal classroom settings were the least acceptable study location among adults. The study predicts that there is likely to be growing public sentiment for formal recognition and the award of "credits" for forms of study other than school and college courses.

Nearly 60% of Americans have never made use of a library to pursue a self-initiated learning project. Only 14% of the adults surveyed reported that they used any library on a regular basis. The related study, Librarian Client-Learning Projects, revealed that even this use of the library is frequently limited to simple assistance in locating findings or getting directions. Libraries are not generally perceived as a significant source of help by a majority of individual adult learners.

The study establishes the concept of the "learning episode" as the basic unit around which the development of a learning project is constructed. Learning episodes may be as short as ten minutes or as long as an hour. Among respondents who perceived themselves as continuing learners, 73% had deliberately looked up some information within the previous seven days. The amount of time spent in this process varied, but in 87% of cases was limited to one hour or less.

Self-motivated adult learners differ in a number of significant ways from those who do not initiate learning projects or whose learning experiences are limited to formal courses or similar activities. For example, the frequency of memberships in organizations is significantly higher for adult continuing learners than for the adult population as a whole. By contrast, over half the nonlearners belonged to no organization whatsoever.

Copies of this report are available from the Book Center, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA, 15260, at a cost recovery of $6.50.